DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

Vol. XIII No. 6 March 20th 1964 Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

IT WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

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Vol. XII No. 18 October 4th 1963 Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

NEW BONN ARMY BOSS NOT A WAR CRIMINAL

Under the headline reproduced above, GERMAN REPORT made a classic bloomer on October 4th 1963, stating:

"The West German Government surprised the world at the end of September by appointing for the first time a Bundeswehr Commander in Chief who is not known to be a criminal. The new C in C is General Heinrich Trettner. Like all other top Bundeswehr officers, he served Hitler truly throughout the Second World War, but unlike his two predecessors, war crimes charges have never been levelled against him."

This statement must now be retracted. Further research in the nazi archives has shown that General Trettner, who commands all West German forces today:

Took part in the criminal air raid on the open town of Guernica in Spain in 1937.

Personally ordered the bombing of Rotterdam, Holland, in May 1940, after a cease fire had been arranged.

Here is a summary of General Trettner's career:

He was born in 1907, son of a regular officer of the Kaiser's army. In 1925, at the age of 18, he became a cadet officer in the Reichswehr. In 1932, after completing his training, he was transferred to the camouflaged Luftwaffe, still illegal under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. (The existence of a German Air Force was only admitted by Hitler in 1935.)

In November 1936 he volunteered for service in Spain as adjutant of the "Condor Legion", the nazi air force which played a decisive part in helping Franco to victory in the Spanish Civil War. He served in Spain until early in 1938. He was squadron captain of Squadron K/88, a formation of Junker 52 bombers; on April 26th 1937 his squadron carried out the raid on the open town of Guernica in the Basque country in Republican Spain. 1654 persons, almost all civilians, were killed in the raid, which was the first purely "terror" raid on an open town.

After returning from Spain, Trettner was promoted to the rank of captain, and appointed general staff officer of the 7th Parachute Division. On May 10th 1940, the day the nazi western offensive was launched, he landed by parachute together with General Student, the divisional commander, in Rotterdam, Holland. Four days later, on May 14th, the battle for Holland was practically over; the Dutch garrison of Rotterdam was treating for capitulation, and a cease-fire had started at 10.30 in the morning. After the cease-fire had been arranged, Trettner radioed for a mass bombing of the city; as a result, the centre of Rotterdam was flattened, and many hundreds killed.

On May 26th 1940 the "Völkischer Beobachter", official nazi newspaper, reported the award of the "Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross" for his outstanding services.

Later in 1940, Trettner made all preparations for his division to drop north of Folkstone in the planned invasion of Britain, the invasion which never took place.

After helping to plan the nazi parachute attack on Crete in May 1941, Trettner was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and appointed Chief of Staff of the 11th Paratrooper Corps.

After service on the eastern front, he was sent to Italy at the end of 1943 as commander of the 4th Parachutist Division. Promotion and decorations came his way again; on July 1st 1944 Hitler promoted him to Major General, and in September 1944 he received the "Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross", second highest nazi decoration. In October 1944 he commanded his division in "police actions" against Italian partisans in the area north of Florence. All such nazi "police actions" involved the burning of villages and the murder of civilian hostages.

One month before the end of the war, Hitler promoted Trettner, who was only 37 years old, to the rank of Lieutenant General. On April 29th 1945 the German forces still fighting in northern Italy surrendered to the Allies; General Trettner ignored the surrender order and fought on together with some SS units until he was captured on May 4th.

After his release from a POW camp in 1948, Trettner went into business.

(contd. from front page)

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

At the same time he worked together with the so-called "Historical Section" organised by the US occupation authorities, a body of top nazi officers which laid the groundwork for a new West German General Staff. He was an early and active member of such militarist organisations as the "Association of Former German Paratroopers" and the "League of German Soldiers".

In 1951 he called publicly for the release of imprisoned war criminals, stating: "There is no other nation, the leading section of which has been exposed to such debasement. We must struggle for equal rights and for the release of those imprisoned." ("Fortschritt" West Germany, July 13th 1951).

When the new West German Bundeswehr was raised in 1956, Trettner was immediately appointed Major General, and was the first West German officer to serve on the NATO staff in Paris; his post was head of the logistics section. From 1960 to 1963 he commanded the 1st Corps of the Bundeswehr, and since January this year he has been Inspector General of the Bundeswehr.

(Trettner's predecessors in this post were: (1) General Adolf Heusinger, former chief of Hitler's Operations Department; in 1961 the Soviet Union asked the United States to extradite him for trial on war crimes charges.

(2) General Friedrich Foertsch, who was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment for war crimes by a Soviet court in June 1950, and handed over to West Germany in 1955 before the expiry of his sentence.)

LABOUR & MLF

When the Test-ban treaty was signed the whole world was relieved. . . . The Test-ban, in fact, was a signpost. It pointed to the creation of nuclear-free zones, a settlement that would drain the danger out of the Berlin situation, a growing recognition of a comman interest between the Soviet Union and America and a halting, then a reversal, of the arms race . . .

Yet though the road to peace is open, a road-block is being prepared. It is the NATO multilateral nuclear force. Mr. Harold Wilson has always understood this and has always spoken out against the creation of, and British participation in, a nuclear force that would provoke antagonism by the Soviet Union . . .

"The top Soviet leaders," he told the House of Commons last July, "insist on one essential interpretation of the antiproliferation agreement. It is that there must be no spread, direct or indirect, of nuclear weapons.

"Frankly, the Russians would regard a multilateral or mixed-manned force as a breach of such an agreement; or, if the multilateral force were in existence before the negotiations, they would regard it as an impediment, indeed as a fatal bar, to the conclusion of such an agreement . . ."

Mr. Wilson went on to explain what some people regard as the Soviet "obsession" with the Germans. "It is an obsession that we should have had", he said, "had we suffered at the hands of the Germans in the way in which the Russians suffered." Twenty million Russians, he pointed out, died during the war.

Even if all the German generals and admirals who served Hitler are now reformed characters, even if the Bundeswehr is uncontaminated by neo-Nazism, even if every single German in a high position no longer dreams of recovering the "lost territories" in the East, these Russian fears of a resurgent Germany remain a factor in the international situation.

Any proposals designed to give West Germany any degree of control and command of nuclear weapons reinforce such fears. The multilateral force, suggested by its sponsors as a means of checking the growth of German nuclear ambitions, would actually encourage them. Appetite grows with what it feeds on.

It is no use telling the Soviet Government, or anyone else for that matter, that the MLF will be subject to an American veto. Herr von Hassel, West German Defence Minister, has already disposed of the argument in a burst of frankness. He said that the American veto could not be expected to last for ever and added that the creation of the MLF would not satisfy German demands for medium-range nuclear missiles on German soil.

The consequences of the MLF, therefore, are quite clear. They have been spelled out by Mr. Wilson. "I am in no doubt", he has said, "that this really would mean the end of any policy of constructive co-existence. It would be as much a turning point in history, and as much a fateful milestone on the road to a third world war as Hitler's march into the Rhineland was towards the last war."

He was not speaking merely for himself. He spoke for the whole Labour Party, inside and outside the House of Commons, and expressed the mounting doubts of many leading Europeans and Americans . . .

("Tribune", London, February 28th)

"Why Pick on Me?" Says Nazi

One of the accused SS guards at the Auschwitz trial in West Germany complained on March 9th that he was being "picked upon" while far more prominent guilty men were at liberty.

The SS man, Oswald Kaduk, stated: "Theodor Oberländer (former West German Refugee Minister) and Hans Globke (former State Secretary to Chancellor Adenauer) are running about at liberty in the Federal Republic; why are things measured on two different scales?"

Kaduk is one of 22 Auschwitz guards charged with mass murder in the biggest nazi liquidation camp.

Polish Bomb-Freezer

All nuclear weapons in Central Europe should be "frozen", the Polish Government proposed in a memorandum published on March 5th. The main proposals were:

1. The freeze should cover Poland, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and the German Federal Republic. Other countries should have the right to join.
2. All types of nuclear and thermonuclear charges should be included in the freeze.
3. The parties adhering to the nuclear freeze agreement should pledge themselves not to produce, purchase, accept from other countries or pass on to other countries any of the weapons included in the agreement.
4. A control system should be set up to guarantee adherence to the freeze agreement. Control should be exercised by mixed commissions on a parity basis of representatives of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO, and could be expanded to include other countries.

The GDR welcomed the Polish proposals. West German spokesmen dismissed them as "just another plan".

THE "OXFORD PLAN"

Realistic Bid to Tackle German Problem

A group of Oxford students, representing the Oxford University German Society and the Oxford University Liberal Party Group have drafted an interesting series of proposals for the future of Germany. The plan was presented at a meeting of the two groups on February 24th.

The "Frankfurter Allgemeine", most influential conservative West German newspaper, described the Oxford Plan on February 29th as "Utopian" and "highly dangerous".

GERMAN REPORT does not agree with many features of this plan, but welcomes it as an honest and realistic attempt to face the difficult and dangerous problem of Germany today. The main points of the plan, slightly condensed for space reasons, but preserving all the main features, are reproduced below, followed by a few editorial comments.

Today, the reunification of Germany still remains a desirable aim if the peace of Central Europe and the world is to be ensured, and a realistic, humanitarian outlook demands that the unresolved German problem should not be postponed indefinitely. At a time when there are signs of a considerable easing of tension in the Cold War, it is appropriate that a solution of the German problem should also be sought.

The proposals contained in this document represent an attempt to find such a solution. Many solutions that offered themselves would have proved unacceptable either to the East or to the West and had to be rejected; for no solution is possible that cannot satisfy the demands of both sides. We submit, therefore, that willingness to compromise is the only spirit in which reunification can be achieved.

Since the East is hardly likely to accept proposals for a reunified Germany within the Western bloc, there remain only two possibilities for reunification: confederation and neutrality. Confederation may be dismissed as impracticable. Neutrality appears therefore to be the only feasible solution; it will, however, be a difficult one.

A Permanent Council should be set up by the Four Powers, preferably under United Nations chairmanship, to decide upon a basis for German reunification.

The East and West German Governments would not be directly represented on this council, but would be present in an advisory capacity during negotiations. This step is necessary if recognition of the East German Government is to be avoided by the West.

The Western Powers could, however, undertake to give the West German Government the right of veto on all Western proposals before they are put forward. The Soviet Government would presumably come to a similar agreement with the East German authorities.

Decisions of the Permanent Council would have to be unanimous and agreement could, we believe, be reached along the following lines:

The reunited Germany shall consist of that area at present covered by the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic and Berlin.

(The Oxford Plan then outlines constitutional proposals for the proposed united German state).

While the reunited Germany will be a sovereign state, she will have to accept certain restrictions on foreign and home affairs in order to meet the very real fears of a reunified Germany felt by both East and West.

Germany's eastern border shall be defined as the Oder-Neisse line, as provisionally agreed at Potsdam in 1945. Representatives of the Polish government shall be invited to negotiations when this question is under discussion.

For a period of not less than fifteen years after reunification, Germany shall undertake not to enter any military alliances. This undertaking shall become void in the event of an armed aggression against Germany.

The former occupying powers shall guarantee Germany's sovereignty, security and neutrality. Her neutrality shall be defined as non-membership of any military alliance and the refusal to allow foreign bases on her soil.

Germany shall, however, be permitted to enter into economic associations with other sovereign states, but not into political union. German membership of the European Common Market, for example, can only continue if the latter body remains purely an economic association.

A reunited Germany will require an armed force to preserve internal order and safeguard her sovereignty. The nature and limits of this force shall be determined by the Permanent Council.

Major industries at present under state control shall remain so for a period of not less than five years after reunification. In this way, Germany would not be wedded either to the communist or the capitalist economic system in the years after reunification.

In the past the West has reiterated demands for free elections throughout Germany, with the implication that Germany would choose to remain in the Western Alliance. The right of the Germans to run their country in freedom is essential — but to do this they will have to abandon their role in NATO. The Western Powers and the Germans in particular, must decide how much they really desire reunification. This cannot be over-stressed; they must choose between a neutral, reunified Germany, and Germany divided as it is today.

The greatest concession of America, Britain and France will be the loss of West Germany in the Western Alliance. A reappraisal of defence policy will then be necessary. However, it is hoped that in a substantially demilitarised Europe the situation would be less tense than at present.

The onus rests equally on the USSR and her willingness to withdraw from East Germany. That she will do so is not at all certain, but these proposals have gone as far as possible to meet the Soviet position without seriously infringing the rights of the Germans.

There is a possibility that any or all of the powers might refuse to cooperate over German reunifica-

tion, or to make the concessions, undeniably large but necessary. Should this be so, it would still be possible to lessen the tension and danger to peace presented by the European problem.

A form of arms control, nuclear and conventional, could still be negotiated. Meanwhile we must on no account allow West Germany a finger on the nuclear trigger, not even within a mixed-manned fleet; this would be nonsensical in view of Russian fear of German militarism. Recognition of the Oder-Neisse line will help to ease tension and need not wait until reunification.

East Germany should not be recognised while there is any hope of reunification, for this would only confirm the division of the country. And under no circumstances should West Berlin's connections with West Germany be severed. Nor should measures for safeguarding the freedom of the city be neglected.

GERMAN REPORT comments:

1. The Oxford Plan states: "Confederation may be dismissed as impracticable." This is not the point of view of the GDR Government. It believes that in fact, under present conditions, reunification must be dismissed as impracticable. If some form of neutralisation, as suggested in the Oxford Plan, can be implemented, this would produce conditions in which the two German states could cooperate in various fields; this could lead to a loose confederation. When such a stage has been reached, it may be possible to discuss reunification.

2. The Oxford Plan proposes that the Four Powers should take the responsibility for working out a plan for Germany, with representation for the East and West German Governments only in an advisory capacity. This suggestion is completely unacceptable to the GDR Government, which states that the future of Germany must necessarily be worked out primarily by the two German states.

3. The Oxford Plan states: "East Germany should not be recognised ... for this would only confirm the division of the country." If this line of thought is pursued to its logical conclusion, then the western powers should also withdraw their recognition of West Germany, since this recognition too would confirm the division of the country. In any case, refusal to recognise the GDR results from a confusion of cause and effect; Germany is very effectively divided today, and the presence or absence of a British Embassy in East Berlin makes no difference to this fact.

Farming in the GDR

by an Agricultural Correspondent

In the nineteen years since the end of World War II there have been three main stages in the development of agriculture in the eastern part of Germany, today the German Democratic Republic. A further step forward was heralded at the Farmers' Congress held in Schwerin at the end of February.

The first stage was the large-scale land reform embarked upon immediately after the war's end. The eastern part of Germany was traditionally a land of large Junker estates; by the end of 1947 all estates of over 250 acres and all landed property of war criminals had been expropriated and shared out amongst poor peasants, re-settlers from eastern Europe and farm labourers. New farms were allotted to more than 200,000 families and 350,000 small peasants received additional land. Some estates such as stud farms, seed nurseries and so on (about 7% of farming land), which could not well be divided up, were converted into state farms and run on the same lines as the nationally-owned factories.

Since there was an acute lack of agricultural machinery and little chance of supplying it in large quantities in the near future, state-owned machine and tractor stations were set up from which farmers could hire out machinery at cheap rates.

The second stage began in 1952 when peasants in various parts of the Republic began to get together and form agricultural production cooperatives (LPG — Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften). By the end of 1959 nearly half the land was farmed cooperatively. Roughly two-thirds of the cooperative farms were Type I and one third Type III.

There were three types of cooperatives. In Type I the farmer brought only his land into the cooperative and everything else — garden, grazing and woodland, livestock, machinery and tools — remained his private property. In Type II, an intermediate type, the farmer also brought his draft animals and machinery and tools into the cooperative; he could keep a horse or a draft ox and some breeding stock for himself. In Type III, the most highly socialised type, members pooled nearly all their farming property, retaining only a small plot and one or two animals.

These early cooperators had done a pioneer job in showing that cooperative farming worked better than private farming; many Type III LPGs now had their own machinery and were trying out new farming methods on their larger fields; their bigger herds of livestock were better housed, could be looked after with proportionately less labour power and were more profitable.

It was therefore considered time to go on to a third stage. Early in 1960 a big drive started to get all farmers to join up in cooperatives, and by early autumn this had been achieved, although a large proportion of the new LPGs were quite small — sometimes only three or four farms joined together. By August 1960 there were over 19,000 LPGs with a total membership of just under a million. About two-thirds of these were the simple Type I LPGs and a few of Type II, farming about two-fifths of the land; the other third were Type III, but they farmed three-fifths of the land. Almost all farmers who joined as late as 1960 went into Type I LPGs, since the simpler form was a less drastic change for traditionally conservative people.

This quick success in getting all farmers into the cooperatives led to some over-zealous attempts — soon stopped, however — to get them to join Type III LPGs before they were ready, either in their own minds or with regard to the practical conditions necessary. The change-over meant a sudden increase in the demand for agricultural machinery, mechanically-minded workers, bookkeepers, trained animal husbandrymen to look after large herds, veterinarians and so on. Crop rotation systems had to be worked out for the new, large fields, new buildings had to be put up for large numbers of cattle and pigs and workers trained to look after them. There was a drop in production in the next two years, although this was partly due to exceptionally bad weather. The situation was made even worse by the continuing steady drain of young people away from the land and into better-paid, more comfortable jobs in industry. Many young people from the towns volunteered for work on the land, but conditions were very difficult for them, because of the lack of housing, recreational facilities and opportunities for further study.

During the past three years conditions have improved; more machinery is now in use on the land, farming

methods and management have improved and agricultural production has returned to the pre-1961 level. Shortage of fodder held back livestock production until last year, but big improvements have been made in planning in-between fodder crops, harvesting and storage and by 1963 it was again possible to do without large quantities of imports. The GDR was able to dispense altogether with imports of sugar, potatoes and fresh milk, had to import only 2% of its eggs, 6% of its vegetables, 14% of its meat, 21% of its butter and 22% of its grain.

A number of LPGs which had previously not been able to manage without government subsidies are now working at a profit, and many of the Type I LPGs have been able to organise their work on a satisfactory cooperative basis.

The fourth stage, announced at the Farmers' Congress in Schwerin, aims at mechanising and industrialising agriculture throughout the GDR along the lines already tried out by a few of the old-established Type III LPGs and state farms. Most of these Type III LPGs, whose membership now totals about 600,000, and the state farms, are still run more or less like conventional large farms; the final aim is to transform them into enterprises run like industrial enterprises. Each enterprise will have a considerable degree of independence and will concentrate on one or two important products; it will be run by qualified specialists with complete systems of suitable machines. The choice in specialisation will depend on the region, on the type of soil or grazing land and on the traditional farming carried out in a particular part of the country. The German Academy of Agricultural Sciences has been experimenting successfully in this type of specialised farming since 1957. Care will, of course, have to be taken that specialisation is properly planned and timed, so that no disproportions arise when an enterprise drops certain types of production and steps up other types.

There is still a chronic labour shortage on the land; the lack of young workers is especially serious, so that women are at present doing far too much heavy work in many areas. Apprentice training will have to be improved, better housing will have to be provided, more encouragement and better facilities will have to be given to women to improve their qualifications, and far more attention will have to be paid to providing more culture in rural areas.

But the labour problem will also have to be attacked from another angle; labour productivity must be vastly increased through rationalisation and mechanisation of farm work, both in the fields and in the farmyard, improving the quality of the soil through better drainage and more chemical and natural fertilising, and through specialising and concentrating on the most important branches of farming. Investments will have to be channelled into the most important projects.

Special differentiated plans have been worked out for improving management in the three types of LPG, all aiming at higher production and labour productivity figures with the minimum expenditure of labour power and means of production. These developments are to be encouraged by directing the remaining government subsidies into channels which will provide a genuine incentive for farmers to make the necessary improvements.

In his speech at the Congress, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the GDR State Council, gave some examples of how subsidising would work in future; Type III LPGs, for example, will no longer get subsidies for the purchase of machinery but will be permitted for some time to sell a larger proportion of their animal produce at ordinary market prices; this will be a direct encouragement to them to produce more so as to find the money to buy what they need.

New price systems for produce and machinery, and a new system of credits and taxation are to be worked out which will give the LPGs a direct incentive to produce more to sell at lower prices and still make a profit for their enterprises. Bookkeeping will be simplified and eventually mechanised; as a speaker at the Congress remarked, every little village shop has its cash register and it is even more important for the LPGs to have such mechanical aids.

GDR PRIME MINISTER IS SEVENTY

Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the GDR, celebrated his 70th birthday on March 11th. Born in Brunswick, he learned the trade of a printer and joined the socialist movement when he was 17.

In the Weimar Republic he was for a time Social Democratic Minister of Education in the Brunswick Provincial Government. He was a Social Democratic Deputy of the Reichstag from 1925—1933.

During the nazi period Grotewohl was active in the underground opposition and was arrested twice.

After 1945 he became chairman of the re-organised Social Democratic Party in the eastern zone of Germany. He played a prominent role in bringing together the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party, which merged in the eastern part of Germany to form the Socialist Unity Party in April 1946. He has been a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party since its foundation.

When the GDR was founded in October 1949, Grotewohl became its first Prime Minister, a post which he still occupies. In recent years ill health has reduced his activities.

The Soviet Union marked Otto Grotewohl's 70th birthday by awarding him the Order of Lenin for his services to the cause of peace and socialism.

Sir, – Even during active hostilities against forces of militantly communist powers, it has been possible for doctors under the Geneva Convention to cross no-man's-land. Is it now impossible for the International Red Cross to issue travel documents that will allow east German doctors to attend medical meetings in Britain?

I am organizing the Second International Symposium on Ultrasound as a Diagnostic and Surgical Tool to be held in London the week before the Symposium Internationale de Diagnostica Ultrasonica in Ophthalmologia is being held at the Humboldt University in east Berlin from June 3 to 5.

I have been invited to take part in the Berlin meeting and I invited Dr. W. Buschmann, organizer of the Berlin meeting, to attend the London Symposium and describe his outstanding work in this field.

I have received an official statement from the Foreign Office explaining NATO policy over travel documents. I can accept that a case can be made for preventing tourist traffic until reciprocity is established but to reduce communications to the point where doctors cannot cross on professional duties, while still permitting trade, appears illogical and deplorable.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS GORDON
Friston House, 25 Church Rd.
Richmond, Surrey

(from "The Times", March 3rd 1964)

"Legal Reprisals"

by Otto Köhler

(The article printed below is a condensed translation of a contribution to the March 1964 issue of "Pardon", West German satirical magazine. We dislike explaining jokes or satire, but to prevent any confusion, it should be noted that only the first two paragraphs are satirical; the remainder is deadly earnest.)

Munich Provincial Court recently acquitted a factory owner who admitted raping three Italian women working for him. His defence lawyer read to the court a newspaper report about Sicilian workers who had earlier raped two German women. The defence lawyer submitted that his client had "taken independent action to counter crime in Southern Italy". His client was a respectable man and at the time of the raping had not been conscious of wrong-doing. The prosecuting attorney said that the newspaper report altered the whole case; the factory owner had obviously indulged in a perfectly legal reprisal. He should be acquitted.

A German law student, tried by the same court for the murder of an African fellow-student, stated that he had heard in a lecture that coloured Africans had murdered a nun, poured petrol over the corpse, roasted it and then devoured it. The murder of his fellow-student had been an act of retribution. The law student's defence lawyer submitted that his client had "taken independent action to counter crimes against missionaries". His client was a respectable man and there was no evidence that he had been conscious of wrong-doing at the time of the killing. The accused was acquitted.

The two cases reported above are imaginary, but judging by the standards applied in the Munich Provincial Court on January 22nd 1964, they could very well have taken place.

Erich Deppner, business advisor and former SS Major, was acquitted by the Munich Provincial Court No. 1 on January 22nd of connivance in 65 murders. In April 1942 he had personally liquidated, by shots in the back of the neck, 65 Soviet prisoners of war in Amersfoort, Holland.

Defence lawyer Dr Rudolf Aschenauer told the court that this was no crime. The shootings had been prompted by impeccably humanitarian motives, since they were "independent actions to counter war crimes". Aschenauer produced in court a White Book of the nazi Foreign Office issued in 1942 which throws a significant light on communist table manners. It states that Red Army soldiers in Feodosia in the Crimea had eaten German prisoners of war. The court heard this evidence with deep emotion and raised no objection to its source.

"The White Book revealed inhuman crimes in Feodosia which cried out to be avenged", Dr Aschenauer stated. "My client is innocent. The shooting of the 65 prisoners of war was legal". It was an act of retribution for the crimes described in the White Book.

The public prosecutor, Dr Lehmair, stated that acts of vengeance were "undesirable under any circumstances", but "under the present legal system in the Federal Republic" the accused Deppner could only be punished if it were proved that he had been conscious of wrong-doing.

Thirty-one-year-old Dr Hubert Grader, assistant public prosecutor, then stressed that Deppner was a respectable man and could on no account be called an "accomplice in crime". The nazi White Book of 1942 contained evidence of incredible crimes, contrary to all the tenets of international law. This altered the whole case. The Russians had committed their flagrant breach of the Geneva Convention prior to the reprisals taken against the Russian prisoners of war. The executions in Holland must therefore be regarded as legal.

(Dr Grader overlooked certain details which might have made it difficult to acquit the accused; one might point out, for instance, that the Germans had here and there committed some small breaches of international law even before the Soviets allegedly did so in Feodosia in the winter of 1941. These German breaches included the failure to declare war, the order to kill all captured commissars on the spot, the mass shooting of civilians and so on.

It might be equally tactless to enquire why the alleged violation of international law committed by the Russians in Feodosia led to reprisals on Russian prisoners four months later, 2,500 miles away in Holland. International law countenances reprisals — if at all — only in the area in which the original crime was committed; but perhaps Dr Grader thinks that Holland is in the Crimean peninsula.)

Dr Grader cautiously admitted that the evidence might tend to show that murder had been committed, but said there was no proof that the accused had been conscious of wrong-doing.

Former SS Major Erich Deppner was acquitted on the grounds of lack of evidence.

Dr Aschenauer is also defence lawyer at the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt. Perhaps he has already thought of a way in which he can present the mass murders perpetrated in Auschwitz as "independent action to counter war crimes".

Nazi Staff Chief for NATO?

The West German Government is urging that a Bundeswehr general should be appointed chief of staff of the Military Standing Group of NATO, the "New York Times" reported on March 2nd. Since all the Bundeswehr generals served Hitler in leading positions during World War Two, this would mean that a nazi-trained military figure would occupy the key post in NATO.

The "New York Times" stated that the proposal had been made by General Adolf Heusinger, retiring chairman of the NATO Military Committee; Heusinger was Hitler's chief of operations.

"The Military Standing Group, which is responsible for the highest strategic guidance of the 15-nation alliance's forces, is composed of military representatives of the United States, Britain and France", the "New York Times" reported.

"West Germany's proposal, which is being studied by the Military Committee, was prompted by the conviction that it should play a role in strategic planning commensurate with its position as the largest European contributor to the alliance's conventional forces."

Commenting on the proposal in an editorial entitled "The German Plot", the London "Daily Express" stated on March 3rd:

"West Germany is asking for an important share in the strategic direction of NATO... Germany is already the chief European contributor to NATO. As the Americans withdraw, she will increasingly dominate the alliance. And she has sinister ambitions to use NATO to settle her grievances with Russia, to recover the lost territories. What madness it would be for Britain to involve herself in this German plot!"

War Crimes Charges to Lapse?

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has protested strongly against West German plans to end the prosecution of war crimes next year.

West German Minister of Justice Ewald Bucher stated on March 2nd that no further war crimes prosecutions would be initiated in West Germany after May 8th 1965. He stated that West German law provided for a statute of limitations which laid down that no prosecution for murder could be started more than 20 years after the offence. May 8th 1945, the date of the German capitulation, has been taken as the starting point for this 20-year period.

The GDR Government, in a declaration published on March 10th, stated that this inner-German law was subordinate to international law, which made no provision for any statute of limitations on nazi crimes. The GDR statement pointed out that Article 25 of the West German Constitution specifically provided that international law overrode German national law. Both German states had the special obligation to proceed against all war criminals under the Potsdam Agreement, which stated: "War criminals ... shall be arrested and brought to judgment."

The GDR had in the past, and would in the future continue, to prosecute any war criminals who fell into its hands, the statement said.

The GDR proposed that the Ministries of Justice of the two German states should form a joint commission to investigate and initiate the prosecution of all war criminals still at large.

(It was pointed out in Berlin that if West Germany allows the 20-year statute of limitations to operate in the case of war criminals, this would mean that even if Adolf Hitler should reappear, he would not be prosecuted in West Germany.)

"Model General"

An ancient German general who died in March at the age of 93 "was a real model for the young Bundeswehr", West German Defence Minister Kai-Uwe von Hassel stated at the funeral on March 14th.

The "model general", Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, has been living in retirement since 1920, when he was sacked from the Reichswehr for taking part in the proto-fascist Kapp Putsch in Berlin.

The Kapp Putsch was an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Weimar Republic and establish a dictatorship. Many putsch participants later became prominent in the nazi movement.

WANTED: For Mass Murder

Name: Ludwig Hahn, doctor of law.

Date and Place of Birth: January 23rd 1908, Eitzen, Uelzen District.

Present Address: Bahrenfelder Marktplatz 5, Hamburg-Bahrenfeld, West Germany.

Occupation: Deputy Director, Karlsruhe Lebensversicherungsgesellschaft (Life Insurance Society).

Personal History: Joined the Nazi Party on February 21st 1930 (Membership No. 194,465).
Joined the SS on April 21st 1933.
Promoted to SS Lieutenant on April 20th 1936.
Appointed deputy chief of Gestapo in Hanover in April 1936.
Promoted to SS Major on September 26th 1938 and transferred to Berlin Gestapo.
Sent to Bratislava, Slovakia, on August 14th 1940, as Special Emissary of the Reichsführer of the SS.
Transferred to Warsaw, occupied Poland, on October 20th 1941, as Commander of the Security Police and SD (Security Service).
Promoted to SS Lieutenant-Colonel on November 9th 1941.
Promoted to SS Colonel on April 20th 1944.

No evidence has come to light on Hahn's activities as Gestapo officer in Hanover and Berlin. Warsaw, where he was chief of Security Police from 1941—44 was the scene of one of the most frightful nazi reigns of terror. High point of the terror was the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942—43, with the murder of an estimated 500,000 Jews. Official nazi documents show that security police under Hahn's command played a leading part in the "resettlement" of the Warsaw Jews to the death camp of Treblinka, and the final liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the heroic Ghetto Rising in April 1943.

On August 17th 1943, SS Colonel Ludwig Hahn proposed one of his men for a medal, stating in the official recommendation:

"SS Corporal Blösche has been occupied for some months in the resettlement of Jews in the Ghetto. When the action began on April 19th 1943, Blösche was useful since he knew the area very well; he repeatedly and courageously overcame armed resistance. Hahn."

On March 31st 1944, SS General Kaltenbrunner proposed his further promotion in the SS, writing:

"Dr Hahn is an old and proven National Socialist and SS officer, who has always mastered the task set him. He is distinguished by his all-round experience, careful methods, and leadership ability."

* * *

No attempt has hitherto been made to bring Hahn to justice, although full details of his crimes were published in the book "Das Dritte Reich und Seine Vollstrecker" by Josef Wulf (Arani-Verlag, West Berlin, 1961). He has been living openly under his own name in Hamburg for many years. His position as director of an insurance company is believed to be nominal; his real job is that of a senior officer of the West German intelligence service (Gehlen Organisation).

"Vanishing Killer" Found in Argentina

Dr Gerhard Bohne, one of the four doctors charged in West Germany with "euthanasia murders" during the nazi period, was arrested in Buenos Aires early in March, and extradition proceedings are now pending. Dr Bohne, who was charged with 15,000 killings, escaped to South America in 1963 while out on bail.

The trial of the "euthanasia" killers began in Limburg, West Germany, on February 18th, but only one of the accused doctors, Dr Hans Hevelmann, was present. Two of the accused died mysteriously a few days before the trial opened.

(For the full background, see GERMAN REPORT, March 4th 1960, September 29th 1961, February 21st and March 6th 1964.)

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

The law is an ass, as Beadle Bumble told us in Oliver Twist, but sometimes, in the West German courts at least, a very revealing ass. Munich Provincial Court recently ruled that a West German publisher could no longer distribute a "Lexicon of German Writers" which stated that a West German poet named Max Barthel had "affiliated himself to National Socialism". — Herr Barthel did, in fact, get pretty thoroughly mixed up with the nazis, churning out poems with lines like "The Fuehrer calls, and all of us are there!"; but that is not the point I want to get at.

What I found so revealing was this sentence in the judgment: "It is open to doubt whether it is disdainful to state that someone affiliated himself to National Socialism."

Quite. In the ruling atmosphere in West Germany it might almost be regarded as a recommendation.

Side-Effects

One of the curious side-effects of the division of Germany, and the establishment of two separate German states has been the long and complicated legal fight about trademarks. It is a wildly intricate field which will probably continue to provide bread, butter and jam for whole generations of lawyers in many countries, but basically the situation is as follows: various German firms built up world markets for various products under brand names which became household words; after the war, successor firms in both German states battled over the use of these names, worth millions in export, both claiming to be the sole rightful legatee.

The position was complicated by the fact that the post-war division of Germany had taken no account of where the various branches of firms were located; in a number of cases, one part of a firm had been in the eastern part of the country and has now become a nationally owned factory, while the other, in West Germany, is still run by the old monopoly. In other cases, the entire firm is located in the GDR, but some directors and experts have moved to the West and set up business again under the old name.

This was the case with the famous optical firm of Zeiss-Jena, for instance. The original firm in Jena, in the German Democratic Republic, now one of the GDR's model nationalised factories, has been fighting in the courts for 11 years to establish its right to use the title "Zeiss"; a rump firm founded in West Germany in 1949 has been counter-claiming.

On March 6th this year Mr Justice Cross, sitting in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in London, decided in favour of the GDR firm. His ruling goes beyond the realm of a simple squabble on trade marks, and may be worth quoting here:

"On August 2nd 1945, the so-called Potsdam Agreement was signed by the Allied Powers which provided for the elimination of cartels, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements in Germany. On October 30th 1945, Marshal Zhukov, head of the Russian administration in Germany, ordered sequestration of certain property, including the (Zeiss) foundation's property.

"Due to divergence of views on political and economic principles between the western powers on the one hand and the Russians on the other, the Potsdam Agreement never worked well, and, in 1949, a de facto division of Germany was brought about by setting up the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic.

Broken Up

"In the West all that was done was that the large organisations were broken up, while in the east their property was transferred into public ownership. In 1948 the sequestration order of Zhukov was brought to an end and the foundation's works were restarted under public ownership.

"In 1953 a spate of proceedings started, of which this is a specimen. The highest court in East Germany has ruled in favour of the East German foundation, but there have been five decisions against them in West German courts ... The West German courts are wrong in holding that the foundation has no legal entity. I might think differently if I were a West German, but I am not satisfied that the West German courts have done their best in finding against the East Germans. Applying East German law, the trademarks of the foundation belong to the foundation at Jena."

This decision does not mean the end of the struggle for the trademark. The West German firm which calls itself "Zeiss" still has recourse to other British courts, and further cases are pending in the USA, India, Pakistan and Australia. It is, however, a refreshing objective judgment, with its recognition of the de facto division of Germany, of the jurisdiction of the GDR Supreme Court, and of the fallibility of the West German judges who have dealt with the case.

I would just like to append a footnote to Mr Justice Cross's admirable potted summary of post-war German history; he stated "In the west all that was done was that the large organisations were broken up". They were, on paper, and for a year or two. Today practically all the great monopolies which helped Hitler into power, like Krupp and IG Farben, have coalesced again.

Holidays

At this time of the year, people in the northern hemisphere begin to think about their holiday plans, and we have had a number of enquiries from readers who would like to take a look at the German Democratic Republic. The best thing for readers in Britain to do is to get in touch with

Progressive Tours Ltd.
Dept. D.W. 3
100 Rochester Row
London S.W. 1,

who arrange various trips to the GDR; readers in other countries should consult local tourist agencies, and in case of difficulty get in touch direct with the

Deutsches Reisebüro
Berlin N 4
Friedrichstr. 110—112
German Democratic Republic

A word of warning is necessary; the necessity of having a visa, the lack of GDR consulates in western countries which could issue such visas, and also the shortage of hotel accomodation make it advisable to plan such a holiday well in advance.

Trade unionists in Britain who would like to see the GDR in company with other unionists might get in touch with George Spacey, 22 Nolton Place, Edgware, Middlesex, who is arranging such a tour in July. It will take 14 days and cost just over £50.

Turnip Seed

A few weeks ago I noted on this page that a leading Pentagon official has the Dickensially appropriate name of Kilmarx; I am delighted to be able to add that the Vice-President of the GDR Academy of Agriculture is named Professor Rübensam, which translates as Turnipseed.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Krausenstrasse 9, Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 1261 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.

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